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## Kentucky Geological Survey and Bureau of Immigration.

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FRANKFORT, KY., U. S. A.

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# IMPRESSIONS OF KENTUCKY.

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AN ENGLISHMAN

WHO HAS STUDIED HER ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES,  
WRITES OF OUR STATE.

### A GOOD HOME FOR IMMIGRANTS.

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[Correspondence of the Louisville Courier-Journal, Monday, Nov. 19, 1883.]

STEAMSHIP CITY OF ROME, ATLANTIC OCEAN, NOV. 2d.

I have recently had the opportunity of paying a second visit to the State of which Louisville is the most important city. During my first visit, now hardly a year ago, I was considerably impressed with what I saw of the capabilities of Kentucky. It seemed to me to be the part of your great continent particularly adapted for a certain class of emigrants who were being compelled, by sheer force of circumstances, to leave England and find a home on other shores. I had been attracted to your State through the pamphlets which had been issued by Prof. J. R. Procter, of Frankfort. Some two of these accidentally came in my way, and I was led to read them with more carefulness than one is

generally inclined to give to productions, the main object of which is to encourage emigration. I have found in the course of a fairly long experience that, as a rule, emigration pamphlets are works of the imagination, and that the writers of them have gone to the trouble of getting them up with the conviction that it was their duty to paint glowing pictures, accuracy being only a matter of secondary consideration.

The productions bearing the name of Prof. Procter, however, impressed me with their modesty; with the manifest desire to state facts as they were, and also with the great ability which characterizes them. It was impossible to read them carefully and not feel that, if their general statements were in harmony with what really was there, it was a very splendid section of the American republic, and a more than usually fine field for emigration, comparatively unknown to the English people, and more especially to those who were being impelled to seek a home in lands beyond the sea. My interest in Kentucky was awakened at the time when the claims of the

#### **"Great Northwest,"**

as it is called, were being urgently pressed upon my friends and countrymen. By the Northwest I mean that immense section of country traversed by the Northern Pacific Railroad, and more especially those lands through which the Canadian Pacific runs. Dakota, Manitoba, and all the vast tracts stretching away to the north pole, were then written and spoken up just as though they were the freshest and fairest lands on which the sun ever shone. They were lands of "amazing fertility;" they were lands "where wealth awaited every son of toil," and wealth, the coming of which, would not be long delayed. Then, too, they were lands with a "wondrous climate." True, they had but two seasons—summer and winter—yet winter delayed its advent and summer always hastened its appearing, so that the mild beauties of the spring and glowing splendor of autumn were scarcely missed. To me, writing and speaking along the lines above suggested would have been simply amusing, if it had been harmless. Unfortunately, men read and heard it for sober fact. The colors laid on with such vividness fascinated them, and they were tempted by thousands to leave their own land for the treeless prairies, the bitter and prolonged winters, and the thousand and one other discomforts which are the invariable accompaniments of settlement in those bleak and far-off regions of the earth. To me the coun-

tries they were seeking were not altogether strange. Years before the effort was made to "boom" them in the interests of gigantic railroads and enterprising land speculators, I had learned something of their natural characteristics. I had read about them. Books of travel, such as those written by Viscount Milton, Dr. Cheadle, and Maj. Butler, had given me a pretty clear notion of what the seasons were, and with what terrible and continuous severity the winter pressed. The Northwest may grow the finest of wheat, but man wants more than that; he wants society, he wants churches, schools, and newspapers; he wants, if his life is to be lifted above that of an animal, fifty things from which he would have to be excluded one-half the year in that semi-polar clime. All this was brought home to me with ten-fold force by reading what Prof. Procter had to say in his pamphlet, in which he draws a comparison between

#### **Kentucky and the Northwest.**

It was the study of that brochure which led me to resolve that I would see Kentucky the very first opportunity that presented itself. This opportunity came in the winter of 1882. I was thus compelled to take my first glance at the State at a time when it would naturally look its very worst. I would not, as a rule, recommend the bleak days of winter, when the "fierce north winds blow," as a most appropriate time to see any country, yet it was at such a time that I was compelled to pay my earliest visit to your State; but though it was winter, and cold at that, Kentucky presented a marked contrast to certain of the States through which I had to pass in order to reach it. Over New York, over Pennsylvania, and over Ohio there was a mantle of snow, which, in some places, was many inches deep. In Kentucky there was no snow at all. That the weather was keen during part of the time I was in the State I dare not deny, but at no time was it so cold as to prevent locomotion, or to hinder a smart walk from infusing a genial glow into the skin. The absence of snow gave one a chance of viewing some few of the natural beauties of the State, and helped me to get proof of the high condition of cultivation into which the famous Blue Grass Region had been brought. During that visit I made many inquiries, not only with relation to the capabilities of the soil from an agricultural standpoint, but in relation to commerce and manufactures. Like all others who become familiar with Kentucky, I was staggered with the vastness of the revelation made to me concerning her enormous wealth and her

boundless natural resources. This, to those who do not investigate for themselves, seems fabulous. Men find it difficult to realize, and not at all hard to doubt; indeed, when I returned to England and told, through the press and on the platform, some of the facts which I had gathered, I found that there was a tendency to question my statements, or to charitably suppose that I had come under the spell of the wizardry of some Kentucky descendant of Baron Munchausen. Knowing that my judgment had not run wild, and that my statements, written or oral, were not of the class that are usually denominated "highfalutin," I maintained my position and reiterated my statements. As a result of that course, much interest came to be awakened in your State, and inquiries with regard to it poured in upon me from every side. I did not pretend then—nor do I now, for that matter—to be a great authority on

### Kentucky Generally,

though I knew enough, as the result of my first excursion thither, to say emphatically that I should not myself hesitate to select Kentucky as a field for emigration in preference to any other part of the States which I had seen. Yea, more, that I would select it a hundred times before that bleak Northwest, of which I had read and heard so much. Yet, though I had this strong personal preference, I felt that it was not sufficient, and that I must embrace the first opportunity to either confirm my impressions of last winter, or be awakened from what must be otherwise only a dream. Well, sir, I have once more looked upon Kentucky. I have had a chance to wander over a larger portion of her area than I had on my previous visit. I have had the privilege, and such I deem it, of meeting some of her most influential citizens. I have seen a little of the home life of her farmers, and have made a comprehensive inquiry upon all matters which relate to her resources to the extent of unoccupied lands. I have carefully asked concerning the advantages and disadvantages the State might have for the better class of those emigrants who are being drawn away in such crowds from the countries of the old world. I said on my return to England last spring "that in my judgment Englishmen, and especially English farmers whose minds are made up to emigrate, could go farther and fare far worse than Kentucky." That opinion I can now repeat with emphasis. I saw that your State has thousands of square miles of undeveloped territory. I saw that it was rich beyond measure in coal and iron. I noted its vast stores of valuable timber, and became

cognizant of the fact that every day must add greatly to their value. I gathered information concerning the fruitfulness of your soil, not in the famous "blue-grass" region only, but in the districts that lie outside of it. Everywhere it was the same story. The soil of Kentucky was everywhere capable of giving back a rich reward to the husbandman who treated it kindly. Some parts of it were, as a matter of course, more prolific than others, but in no part which I entered was there an acre which would not repay the trouble of cultivation. I may add that I saw methods of farming running over the entire scale of "good, indifferent, and bad." In fact, on more than one occasion, I was grieved to think of the indifference men were showing to the development of fields which they called their own. Many of these would, as the outcome of a little work, have poured into their owners' laps the rich result of a bounteous harvest. I found in certain districts of your State a reluctance on the part of sundry possessors of the soil to put forth one particle more of exertion than was absolutely necessary to live. Some of these men were not quite satisfied with their lot. In fact, I found them contemplating

### "Fresh Fields and Pastures New."

Their conception of life was stock-raising, and they were hoping by the sale of their Kentucky homesteads to get away to Kansas or some other Western State, and there spend the remainder of their time in sheep-raising, or some kindred occupation. There was no reticence on their part with regard to the impelling cause, which was a belief that less labor would be necessary than that which is demanded for growing corn and wheat, tobacco and potatoes. In one place, beautiful for situation, I found a New York syndicate buying up the farms of dozens of this class of men, referred to above, and resolving to offer the partially improved lands on such conditions as would tempt the highest class of English and European emigrants into the State, especially those who were anxious to try the "colony" plan. I saw that there were scores of places in Kentucky admirably adapted for colony sites. Certain views which I hold upon that special mode of settling in a new country received abundant confirmation from interviews which I had with certain of those who have been among the most successful of the Swiss colonists at Bernstadt. I may perhaps be allowed to make special mention of Mr. Haas, whose model cottage in the Louisville Exposition has won general and warm approval. Now, he is a man of considerable intelligence, and is of a class the infusion of which into the



life of any people can not fail to add strength and wealth. Colonists such as he is, and as his companions are, can not be other than powers working for the prosperity of the Commonwealth of Kentucky. Now there is no reason, of which I am cognizant, why your State should not be enriched with many men of his class, the main thing necessary to bring that about being a more widespread knowledge of the manifold advantages which Kentucky has to offer. I do not know what steps your authorities may be taking to encourage settlers. I know that something is being done, or I should not have been drawn toward the spot. This much I did learn while with you: that all the men of enterprise and progress with whom I came in contact felt a very strong desire to see Kentucky march forward with sturdier strides, and to witness the speedy development of her almost limitless resources. These citizens were conscious of the efforts neighboring States are making, and they mourned the fact that their own State was handicapped in comparison with them. It had nothing to give away in the shape of extensive tracts of land which could be held by railroads or other corporations. These bodies, to get a sale for their property and a constituency for their roads, were spending money freely in advertising. Consequently, against their persistent and widespread efforts Kentucky had but a small chance. Without dictating, or even attempting to do so, which would, for a stranger, be as unwise as it would be impertinent, might I suggest the emigration question as one worthy attention by the more enlightened among your State representatives. At present Kentucky has to labor in common with the entire South under the disadvantage of being imperfectly known.

### No Englishman,

for instance, unless he has had the evidence that I have, seems able to comprehend the wondrous change which has been wrought in your part of the great republic since the war. The impressions that generally prevail with regard to it may be summed up thus:

*First.* The soil of the South is exhausted, owing to the system of cultivation adopted in the old slave times.

*Second.* That there is lawlessness and a contempt for human life which make it a very undesirable place in which to seek a home.

*Third.* That the whole of the social surroundings are of such a nature as to cause it to stand out in unpleasant contrast with the North and Northwest.

*Fourth.* That there is no desire upon the part of the people to wel-

come settlers from other lands; that, if they do come, they will be treated as interlopers, and be made to feel that their room is of higher value than their company.

To me all these assertions are utterly absurd. The wondrous fertility of your soils amazed me; while some eight days spent in the city of Louisville convinced me that for good order, for sobriety, and certain other things which go in the direction of social well-being, Louisville will compare very favorably with any English city of corresponding size. There is a tendency to magnify small matters in certain of your journals, and things which we in England would pass over in comparative silence, get so written up that they look to outsiders like very terrible offenses. My own judgment would lead me to the conclusion that human life in Kentucky is just as safe as it is in Great Britain. Then, as to their other points, I have had many proofs of the geniality of your Kentucky natures, and abundant evidence of your warm-hearted hospitality. I know that you are resolved not to be left behind in the march of progress.

Your Louisville Exposition was to me a revelation and a prophecy; a revelation of what the South can do to-day, and a prophecy of what she intends to do in days to come. As to your people looking askance at strangers, nothing can be more contrary to fact. To Englishmen your English blood warms, and in every part of your State I received the assurance that there would be extended the most generous welcome to settlers in your midst, who came with the determination, by honest industry, to develop the resources of your noble Commonwealth. For myself, I can only say that I thank all those good friends who were at such pains to place information within my reach, and to facilitate my progress through the State. Among many, let me single out your able and most courteous State Geologist, Prof. Procter, of Frankfort. To him I am indeed indebted, and the memory of his great kindness would lead me, even if no other consideration existed, to cherish a kindly thought for Kentucky. There are other matters on which I should like to have dwelt, but consideration for your space and the difficulty of writing while an Atlantic gale is blowing, although on the stateliest and steadiest ship that rides its waves, compel me to conclude. This I do with an expression of admiration for the ability with which the *Courier-Journal* is conducted, and a hope that you will not think I have unduly trespassed on your space.

J. WAYMAN,  
Editor *Blackpool Times*, England.

### Kentucky---Facts Worth Remembering.

**Area**, 40,000 square miles. **Population**, (1880), 1,648,599; (native born, 1,589,131; foreign born, 59,488; colored, 271,522). **Temperature**, average annual mean, 55°F. **Rain Fall**, 48 to 55 inches per annum. **Area of Coal Fields**, 14,000 square miles; an extensive area of superior coking coal has been recently discovered. The **healthfulness** of the State has increased as follows since 1850:

Death to population was, in 1850, 1.53 per cent.				
" " " 1860, 1.42 "				
" " " 1870, 1.09 "				
" " " 1880, 0.72 "				

One-half\* of the State is covered with **forests of valuable timbers**, yet the State ranks as the tenth State in value of **agricultural products**. The capacity of the State for diversified agriculture is shown by the following table compiled from the United States Census Reports. In each decade Kentucky excelled all other States in the production of one or more staple articles:

	1850.	1860.	1870.	1880 †
Tobacco .....	Second.	Second.	<b>FIRST.</b>	<b>FIRST.</b>
Indian Corn.....	<b>FIRST.</b>	Fifth.	Sixth.	Seventh.
Wheat.....	Ninth.	Eighth.	Eighth.	Fourteenth.
Rye.....	Eighth.	Fifth.	Fifth.	Seventh.
Hemp.....	<b>FIRST.</b>	<b>FIRST.</b>	<b>FIRST.</b>	<b>FIRST.</b>
Swine.....	Second.	Fourth.	Fifth.	Fifth.
Mules.....	Second.	Second.	Third.	Eighth.
Wool.....	Seventh.	Ninth.	Twelfth.	Twelfth.
Value of Live Stock.....	Fifth.	Fourth.	Eighth.	Tenth.

In 1880 Kentucky ranked as the seventh State in the forest products. The relative decline in the production of wheat and Indian corn was not caused by the small production in Kentucky, but by the growth of States in the North and West where those are the principal crops grown. In Kentucky a more diversified agriculture with a greater variety of products is found more remunerative.

The **center of population** of the United States was located within the borders of Kentucky by the census of 1880.

\* In 1880 the lands were divided as follows, by the U. S. Census returns: In cultivation and grass in rotation, 8,367,910 acres; in permanent meadows and pastures, 2,368,773 acres; in woodland and forests, 10,763,337 acres.

† Forty-seven States included in enumeration of 1880.